



SHARDLOW CRANE RESTORED BY VOLUNTEERS

By Dave Turner

The old canal side crane outside the former Stevens' warehouse, a little downstream of the Clock Warehouse, at Shardlow on the Trent and Mersey Canal was taken down about seven years ago when rust and rot made it a danger to towpath walkers and boaters. (see right). The general agreement was that it ought to be restored but there the matter rested until three years ago when John Baylis wearing his East Midlands WRG hat decided to investigate the costs and possibilities.

Over the next couple of years, when time allowed, members of the Erewash Canal Preservation and Development Association Friday work party cleaned and repaired the various bits and pieces whilst a new 21ft jib was fashioned at the Charles Gregory Ltd wood yard. By the summer of 2014 everything was in place to enable a small number of ECP&DA volunteers to gather at Shardlow and reassemble the crane base leaving only the jib, its supports and lifting chain to reattach.

Positioned on the towpath without easy vehicle access the crane site is best approached





on foot or by boat. As the jib and most of the remaining parts were in the canal side garden of John and Sheila Cooke it was decided to transport them by boat. Step forward Isobel and myself as the only working boat owners involved with the group to volunteer **Bath** for the job.

So it was on the last Friday of October **Bath** made its way through Shardlow with the jib, scaffolding tower, generator, chain lift and an assortment of other tools to meet a large turn out of ECP&DA volunteers augmented by a few others. The reassembly started well but ran into a second day when a problem with the jib supports was discovered. The crane however, now looks as good as new. The cost of the whole project approaching £600 was met mainly by the Trent and Mersey Canal Society and local donors.



Once the reassembly was over and photos taken, John and Christine Baylis on their boat *Thornbury* and ourselves on **Bath** set off downstream to our overnight mooring at Trent Lock at the bottom of the Erewash Canal. The Navigation served up a good meal and well deserved pint before the next day's dash back to Langley Mill just ahead of the first of the winter stoppages at Dockholme Lock.

SPOTLIGHT SHONE ON LOST CANAL WONDERS

The 'Lost Wonders of the Waterways World' is the theme of a new photo competition launched to capture the hundreds of miles of derelict canals across England and Wales.

The competition, launched by the Canal & River Trust in partnership with The Inland Waterways Association, is asking for photographs of derelict or unrestored waterways which capture the emotion and feeling of our 'lost' waterways to help rediscover and bring these much-needed spaces back to life. At the height of the Industrial Revolution, Britain boasted over 5,000 miles of navigable canals and rivers helping to transport goods and raw materials and transforming towns and cities. They were the envy of the world and helped to establish Britain as an industrial powerhouse.

However, the growth in railways in the 19th century and road transport in the 20th century led to around 2,000 miles of waterways being closed or abandoned. Thanks to the efforts of countless volunteer campaigners over 200 miles of canals have been restored since the turn of the millennium, bringing prosperity to communities, boosting property prices and helping local people to lead active, healthy lifestyles. ➔



Sir Tony Robinson joined the rallying call for people to rediscover and bring back to life last year and described the waterway network as part of the “fabric of our nation”.

Jason Leach, enterprise and restoration manager said: “Many of us have seen striking images of some of our most famous landmarks such as Pontcysyllte Aqueduct, Bingley Five Rise Locks or Standedge Tunnel which are great examples of how special our waterways can be. We’re after originality and good technical ability and pictures that trigger emotion in people.

The waterways are experiencing a wonderful renaissance as more and more people embrace the range of benefits the waterways can offer to their everyday lives. There are hundreds of miles of abandoned waterways out there and we hope it opens up their imagination to the potential of how their local area could look if that canal was restored over time. There are some really inspirational volunteer groups out there who are leading the way in championing canal restoration as they realise the huge benefits the canals offer. They’re being visionary, we hope that they inspire others to get involved and create a lasting legacy for us all to be proud of.

The deadline for submissions is **Friday 10 April 2015** and the winning entry will win vouchers worth £500 and two runners up will scoop £250. Winners will be announced w/c 11 May. For details about how to get involved with a canal restoration group near you and for competition and prize details, simply visit www.canalrivertrust.org.uk/restoration.

NAVIGATION NOTES



From Sue Cawson

I will start with my usual plea. Please when you are out and about boating and you see or have problems do email a report in to C&RT Customer Services, all the email information is on the CRT website. We have managed to influence some of the dredging plans recently, just by emailing problem areas. Numbers of reports are important. There is a rolling dredging plan on the C&RT website which you can look at. This plan is brought about by the C&RT hydrographic survey (each canal is surveyed every 8 years), reports by local area managers and reports by boaters/users. Obviously a complaint by one loan boater won't have much influence!

Many of the modern boaters out there have very little knowledge and skill and it is C&RT's responsibility to make the waterways as safe as reasonably possible for all boaters. Sometimes the changes that are made aren't always for the best, like the additions to the pawls and spindles on the paddles of lugs. C&RT's idea was to try and make it impossible to wind a paddle up without a pawl being on or of a windlass flying off. There have been several reports of quite serious injuries from flying windlasses. What C&RT didn't take into account was that with these modifications you need two hands to wind a paddle down against a head of water. There is a NAG working party looking at better possible solutions. I would welcome your input and feedback.

The winding hole survey run jointly by HNBC and IWA was very disappointing. There were only 80 reports in total and they were mainly about winding holes on the Staffs and Worcs and the Oxford. C&RT are responsible for dredging and maintaining all the winding holes that they own, unfortunately there is no definitive list of all the ones C&RT own, I feel that before a full winding hole survey can have any real meaning we need to know who owns what and all C&RT winding holes should be then marked.

Please report it! Don't just moan on Facebook or in the pub.

03030404040, customer.services@canalrivertrust.org.uk each waterway area also has its own customer services email. You should always get a response to your email within seven days.